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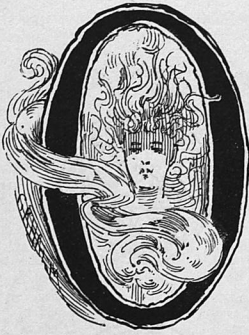
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



FURNITURE COVERINGS.

By N. S. S.

OLD time Gobelin tapestries, as now reproduced, are by far the most attractive of the goods at present used for covering fine furniture. They have an exquisite softness, not found in any other fabric, and while not ancient in fact are so in design and suggestion, and are, therefore, all the more interesting. Many of the best patterns are copied from pieces in the possession of private individuals

and museums, the originals being held at prices that put them quite beyond the reach of all but the most affluent.

The goods of this class that are now most in favor show the delicate colors and graceful patterns of the original, and when properly handled are wonderfully effective. To produce the very best results only a single piece should be used in any article of furniture. If a sofa is to be covered it is much more artistic to use but one piece of tapestry, the remainder being made of other material. Rich plain plush or satin is generally used, the former being preferred on account of its softer effects.

Heavy silk faced brocatelle is among the most popular of elegant coverings. It is made of pure silk and wool, the silk being thrown upon the surface, more especially in the high lights, while in the shadings the wool shows through, giving exquisite softness and delicacy of effect. The patterns are as a rule rather large and striking, showing scrolls and arabesques with long sweeping curves, and a great deal of light, fine tracery in vines, tendrils, sprays, and the like. A few floral patterns are shown, but they seem to be less favored than those already noted. Fine velour, on the contrary, shows mostly floral designs, some of the flowers being most accurately represented. The figures in velour are much smaller than in brocatelle, and with a few exceptions are set quite closely together, having comparatively little plain ground. The ground is satin and throws the softer tints of the plush into bold relief. Mixtures of cut and uncut surface on satin are altogether artistic, and are used on the finest class of furniture.

All silk brocatelle is almost entirely out of use, and is really a drug in the market. There is but little of the old time stock remaining, and that can be bought at the purchasers own price. The preference is altogether for goods with more body, some of the new silk and wool fabrics being almost suggestive of rugs instead of furniture coverings.

Plushes, while still enjoying a fair degree of favor, are less fashionable than the goods previously mentioned.

All silk faced long pile plush is in fair request. It is used to some extent for entire furniture coverings, but is especially popular as trimmings, and to combine with various figured fabrics. In an article on parlor furniture on another page, the various methods of using them are noted. In addition to perfectly plain plush there are some novel and pretty effects produced by different modes of handling during the process of manufacture. The long pile is in some styles slightly pressed in irregular particles, giving a peculiar mottled appearance to the surface. Other plushes show fine lines of frise or uncut effects on the cut surface. Some of these materials are the extreme of elegance. They come in woven, printed or painted designs. Lions heads, owls heads and various odd patterns are shown as well as floral and arabesque figures. These eccentric and pronounced styles are not at all suitable for parlor furniture, although they have been so used. They are more appropriate for assembly rooms, clubs, and similar places. Some exceptionally rich and attractive pieces have been painted in aniline colors. They are suitable for decorative purposes, and make charming odd pieces for presentation occasions. An arm chair covered with this plush in owls head pattern painted in natural colors was recently made for presentation to a gentleman.

Crimped or crushed plushes are also very attractive. Plain goods are steamed and pressed in various odd and irregular lines, the creases being so firmly set that the strength of the hands cannot straighten them. This material is particularly useful for more ordinary purposes where furniture, though handsome,

must have rather hard service, as no reasonable usage can affect the surface which is already as wrinkled as dampness and pressure can make it.

Embossed plushes are too well known to require any description. There are new patterns and full lines of new colors, but no specially novel features. Mohair plushes come in all colors and several qualities. They are plain, embossed and crushed. The plain goods in good grades are among the most durable of all furniture fabrics. The pile is pure mohair and will not crush under any ordinary treatment, and if perchance it is depressed the application of a little moisture and a hot iron held over it without touching the surface will almost always completely restore it. Mohair plushes come also in figured uncut surface, the cut and uncut pile being so arranged that they form patterns and floral designs. A popular covering resembling fine velvet carpeting is called "Wilton" goods, and is both handsome and durable. It is particularly useful for library or sitting-room lounges, or in family rooms where there are children whose romps and games would destroy more delicate fabrics.

Medium priced, serviceable upholstery goods are shown in great variety. Probably the most popular of any one style is the goods known to the trade as "petit point." It is firm, durable, in an excellent assortment of colors, and is among the most desirable of all middle grade upholstery fabrics for regular service. Some of the finer qualities resemble tapestry when seen at a little distance, and as the demand for them increases more pains is taken to bring them out in choice designs and artistic combinations of color. Among the latest designs are large tulip patterns on plain dark ground. There is the leaf and stalk, and the blossom, which is drooping as though partly wilted. The effect is very pretty and graceful. A new departure in this class of goods is a silk mixture. The silk, which is very fine and lustrous, is thrown upon the surface of the ground in a satin weave—and the pattern has nearly all of the high light effects in silk. It is one of the most desirable of upholstery novelties. A very extensive assortment of what are known as ramie or raw silk materials are on the counters of dealers in this line of goods. They are the lowest priced furniture coverings in the market and have a very extended popularity.

Tinsel is largely introduced into many grades of upholstery goods.

For information thanks are due to Messrs. James McCreery & Co., and Messrs. Johnson & Faulkner.



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